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May 25, 2016
For Immediate Release

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Our Great Lakes Must Be Protected from Pipeline Spills

Madison – Today State Senator Tim Carpenter (D-Milwaukee) announced that he has sent a letter to both of Wisconsin's U.S. Senators urging them to join forces with Michigan U.S. Senators Gary Peters and Debbie Stabenow to make sure underwater pipeline segments in and around the Great Lakes are classified as separate "offshore" facilities by the United States Department of Transportation.

The "offshore" designation is reported to be significant because under the Oil Pollution Act the liability for cleanup costs for owners or operators of onshore facilities are capped at \$634 million, whereas companies operating pipelines classified as offshore facilities are required to demonstrate they have sufficient resources to pay for all cleanup costs.

Efforts by the US Senators from Michigan were reported by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. <http://www.jsonline.com/news/michigan-senators-want-higher-liability-for-great-lakes-oil-spills-b99730212z1-380428051.html> A pipeline known as "Line 5" transports 23 million gallons of crude oil and liquid natural gas daily from Wisconsin to Ontario, Canada, including the Straits of Mackinac, which connect Lake Michigan and Lake Huron.

Enbridge estimates cleanup costs for a spill from the line could reach \$1 billion if the break were to happen in the winter, when the straits are iced-over.

"The Great Lakes contain twenty one per cent of the world's fresh water supply. I believe that it is incumbent upon us to act proactively to protect Great Lakes water. Limiting liability provides less incentive for pipeline owners to properly inspect and maintain the lines to prevent a spill in the first place," said Carpenter.

"Our future is undeniably tied to the Great Lakes and its protection, as evidenced by the Great Lakes Water Compact, to jointly manage the water among the shoreline states and provinces on the Great Lakes. Our incentives should be to protect the waters and avoid economic catastrophe of spills," said Carpenter.

A copy of Sen. Carpenter's letter is attached with this release.

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